



After Castro

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CPYRGHT

The dark-haired, spirited, 37-year-old man holding forth in a Manhattan living room the other night has been living dangerously for many years. Once upon a time he was a leading engineer in Cuba; he rebelled against Batista's ruthless tyranny and joined hands with Fidel Castro's small band of lonely crusaders. At continuing personal peril he organized the underground resistance in Havana that helped pave the way for Batista's overthrow.

Then, when he saw the revolution betrayed and a new despotism imposed by Castro, he chose to enlist again in the fight for freedom. His name is Manuel Ray, and his leadership may offer the best hope for a better day in Cuba.

The issue may not be remote. Moscow, having marched Castro up the hill, has now abruptly marched him down again. He has paid a heavy price for his puppetry. It may be only a matter of months before he faces the wrath of the proud people whom he handed over to the Soviet occupation.

But what happens when Castro's time is up?

Too many Americans have assumed for too long that Castro's political demise is the total goal of U. S. policy, and that all our objectives will have been won if and when he decides to make baseball his career.

For the people of Cuba, the prospect is far more complex. They are the target of predatory, unscrupulous adventurers and profiteers who seek, in one form or another, to return them to some equivalent of the Batista era and who rely on American arms and power to achieve their objective.

Manuel Ray seemingly offers the real alternative. His basic program is "the program of the revolution betrayed by Castro." It calls for the establishment of essential liberties and large-scale social reform. It offers no comfort to the alien sugar interests that too long treated Cuba as an economic playground. It would turn back no clocks of equalitarian progress. It would carry forward, without the melancholy music of firing squads, many of the dreams of human equity and humane planning to which Castro initially committed himself.

It was Ray who, back in the early spring of 1961, initially and wisely opposed the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion. He clung to the belief that any meaningful anti-Castro rebellion must come from within Cuba. He has not changed his position on that issue.

While most other exile leaders have apparently abandoned hope for any change short of total U. S. military intervention in Cuba, Ray holds to the faith that Cuba's liberation must be accomplished by the Cuban people—as it was, however briefly, by Castro's small but dedicated legions. And such a rising, he emphasizes, must be based on the assurance that there will be no reinstatement of the economic autocracy of Batista's time.

He is a handsome man who speaks in measured tones, and with remarkably little bitterness or demagoguery. That he was badly treated by CIA's dubious agents in the pre-invasion follies of 1961 is a matter of record; he was obviously regarded as too "far out" because he refused to display any nostalgia for the property arrangements that prevailed in Batista's time.

Yet perhaps the most meaningful fact about the present is that Ray and his cohorts within and outside Cuba are the targets of Castro's harsh denunciations. Obviously Castro understands that they have the deepest roots in Cuban life; that they possess the capacity for valor and sacrifice that made his own revolution possible, and that they cannot be effectively damned as agents of the old exploiters.

Manuel Ray's wife and two children (ages 5 to 12) have found refuge in Puerto Rico. The ex-engineer whose mother was a teacher and his father a small business man has turned his back on the easy comforts of life. It was not many years ago that he was project manager of the Havana Hilton Hotel construction, making \$15,000 a year and occupying the respectable role of president of the Civil Engineers Assn. of Havana.

All that belongs to the past. His disenchantment with Castro began when the firing squads went to work on many men who had, like himself, served in the hills and the underground; when liberation was transformed into a nightmare of tyranny; when the Castro terror so cruelly caricatured all the glory and the anguish of the anti-Batista struggle; when, in short, the revolution began to devour its own children.

Ray is prepared for the long days and nights of waiting. He solicits, let it be emphasized again, no American armed intervention. He pleads primarily for American support of the proposition that there must be a genuine social revolution in Cuba, rather than a rehabilitation of the Batista mob.

Perhaps Manuel Ray does not have all the answers, and perhaps he romanticizes the prospect of early Cuban rebellion. But it is crucial that Americans—and perhaps especially the leaders of American labor—give him a respectful hearing. Many of them played around too long with the chiefdoms of Batista's controlled labor movement, and some of them are still doing so. It is time they got to know Mr. Ray, and extended their hand to him.

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